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there are diviners of various sorts, seers and holy men, called *ajwiga*. Such people may also be priests of the Nyikang cult, but in themselves they do not form part of any organized religious system embracing the whole kingdom. There is said to be no cult of the divine being *Juok*, who is approached through Nyikang and the Shilluk kings.[1]

Myths of Origin and Traditional History

In considering the Shilluk apprehension of order in their universe, we may first suggest how they classify themselves and other people with whom they have been in contact. The name 'Shilluk,' used by most authorities, seems to be an Arab form of their own name for themselves, *Col* or *Ocolo*, or 'the children of *Col*'. They call their country 'the land of *Col*',[2] but it is also spoken of as 'the land of Nyikang', and they may refer to themselves as Okang, which is possibly derived from the name of their leader. All those who now are Shilluk and live in Shilluk country do not think that they had a common origin. Some of them think that they came originally with Nyikang, and others that they are descended from people who in one way or another Nyikang eventually incorporated into his kingdom. The most detailed and circumstantial of Shilluk myths are about the origin of the present internal organization of the Shilluk kingdom. Less detailed stories, which nevertheless seem, for the Shilluk, to have something of the intrinsic validity which we attach to history, are told in order to assimilate to the Shilluk world their knowledge of other Nilotic peoples. In their accounts of their own history, and of their relationship with other Nilotes, we find an interest in process, which is absent from their accounts of their relations with other peoples outside their system. This in itself might be expected, though it might have been supposed that the long period during which they have been in contact with non-Nilotic peoples would have generated more elaborate aetiological stories to explain the presence and customs of quite foreign human beings. Even within the Nilotic world Shilluk stories of their relationship with the Luo of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, with whom they can have had only the most casual and occasional contact for many years, are a great deal more circumstantial than those of their original relationship with the Dinka, who are among their nearest neighbours. They thus have traditions of relationship which do more than account for their social relations at the present day, and which have not been modified to accord with them. There is some indication that they value the knowledge of historical tradition for its own sake.

Shilluk classification of the peoples with whom they have been in contact, or of whom they know, may briefly be described as follows. Differences of function, status, and origin within the Shilluk kingdom are ultimately attributed to Nyikang, or to one of his successors, the early Shilluk kings.

[1] This very brief survey of those features of Shilluk social organization necessary for an understanding of their cosmology is drawn from many sources, which I have not thought it necessary to cite individually.

[2] Westermann, 1912, *et al.*

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Differences and divisions between the Shilluk and other Nilotic peoples are attributed to differences between Nyikang and others who are thought to have been once closely associated with him. Differences between the Shilluk and people whose culture and system of thought are quite unlike their own are attributed to an ubiquitous God, *juok*. Leaving aside for the moment the Shilluk classification of people within their own kingdom, I mention briefly some of the stories referring to the relationship between the Shilluk and some other Nilotes, and between the Shilluk and foreign invaders.

According to one Shilluk tradition,[1] in the original migration from their first homeland, 'the land of Duwat', the Shilluk were with their leader Nyikang, and with them were the Dinka led by Dengdit, the Anuak led by Gilo, and the Luo led by Odimo. There are various versions of this story, and the presence of Odimo in it is inconsistent with other stories about him. The kin relationship supposed to exist between the leaders also varies from one account to another. In this version, the Anuak first broke away, and then the Dinka, and finally, when the Shilluk were on the fringes of the country they now occupy, the Luo turned away towards the Bahr-el-Ghazal. The story shows some idea of successive developments in a necessary chronological order, and the stories of the relationship of the Shilluk with the Luo contain circumstantial details, some of which are confirmed in independent accounts given by the Luo themselves.[2] These are people who are thought to have been involved in Shilluk history from very early times; we are not given any indication that the Shilluk attempt to account for their existence, but only that they themselves account for their relationship with the Shilluk. It is not so with the stories about white and brown people. One tells, for example, how it was that God (*juok*) came to help the *turuk*, the Turk or European,[3] rather than others of his sons, the people of Darfur, the Abyssinians, and the Shilluk, who were afraid or refused to approach him.[4] Another version, found also among other Nilotic peoples, attributes the success of the light-skinned people both to superior guile on their part, and to some preference shown them by God. We are also told that when God began to make men, he made them from light-coloured clay, until his hands became dirty towards the end of his task, and he then made the Shilluk, who lost their equality with the light-skinned people.[5] Like other Nilotes, the Shilluk seem to have singled out writing and guns as the gifts with which God gave supremacy to the foreigners;[6] and Shilluk songs recorded by Hofmayr[7] suggest that circumcision has come to stand for much that is contemptible in foreign custom and

[1] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 14.

[2] J. P. Crazzolara, 1950, has tried to build up the traditions of the Luo (Lwoo)-speaking peoples into a connected history.

[3] Though Turks, Arabs, and Europeans can be verbally distinguished from each other in Shilluk, Europeans, particularly when they are officials, are often called *turuk*.

[4] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 241.

[5] Ibid., p. 227.

[6] Westermann, 1912.

[7] 1925, pp. 360 ff.

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behaviour. Although there are many Shilluk names by which non-Nilotic foreigners may be distinguished from each other, they are also classed together as *obwonyo* (foreigners), a word also used for a reddish millet,[1] and as such they are distinguished collectively from Nilotic peoples who are not included in this category. The Nuba (*dongo* or *dhongo*)[2] seem to occupy a special position among foreigners, for Nyikang himself established a relationship with them by marrying his daughter to a Nuba.

As the Shilluk see it, the other Nilotes were separated from them in the course of a common history. To explain the presence and dominance of foreigners from outside their Nilotic world, they have stories of a metaphysical kind, positing some special act of God. These stories have clearly been invented in recent times for purely explanatory purposes. Shilluk interest in foreigners, as shown in myth and song, centres primarily on the way in which they have been opposed by Nyikang and the Shilluk, and the more they can be subordinated to Nyikang, the more they are assimilated to Shilluk tradition. Thus, it seems that the fighting with the invaders of their country in fairly recent times has, for the Shilluk, little of the imaginative significance which they attach to superficially trivial incidents in the lives of their early kings. If Hofmayr's derivation[3] of the word *obwonyo* (foreigner) is correct, the Shilluks' first national enemy, whom Nyikang urged them to resist, gave their name to others who followed. Nyikang and his successors, the Shilluk kings, are thought to have been the leaders of opposition to such national enemies. Nyikang both relates the Shilluk to other Nilotes whom they know, and focuses their hostility to attacks on their national integrity and exclusiveness. He represents, in this and other ways which may later be considered, the specifically Shilluk way of life and thought.

The Order of the World and Society

The order of Shilluk society is best approached by a consideration of the myths of migration under Nyikang, for some features of Shilluk society are thought to have originated in that period. Some of the details of these myths cannot be fully understood without a preliminary knowledge of the main natural divisions of the Shilluk world. Writers on the Shilluk do not report any story of an original state of chaos, in the strict sense, when man, earth, and sky were together in one undifferentiated whole, though such stories exist among the Dinka. There are Shilluk stories which do seem to suggest that at one time the world was not differentiated as it now is. For

[1] J. A. Heasty, 1937; Westermann, 1912, p. 248, transliterates the word for red millet slightly differently from the word for foreigners. Hofmayr, 1925, says that the word is derived from *ya puny*, the name originally given by the Shilluk to the Fung, with whom they were in early contact. Another word for the Fung, said to include the people of Sennar generally, is *cai*.

[2] Heasty, 1937, *et al.* *Dongo* probably means 'hill-people'. In a hymn quoted by Hofmayr 1925, p. 7, the Fung or the people of Sennar are referred to as *dongo cai*.

[3] See note 1.